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LIVESTOCK and MEAT Industry of MEXICO

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FOREWORD

Mexico, Canada, and the United States, as a unit, make up the North American livestock economy, and trade moves across national borders, for the most part, with a minimum of restraint. The direction of trade is mainly dependent on such factors as price and transportation costs; however, temporary changes in the supply situation may also have some effect on the direction. For the United States, this has meant that during the decade of the 1960's Mexico has ranked in third to fifth place among U.S. beef and veal suppliers, usually ahead of Canada.

In 1965, a relatively favorable price situation in the United States and lack of rain in northern Mexico resulted in a sharp gain in U.S. imports of Mexican feeder cattle as compared with 1964. These imports were large also in 1966. However, in the long run it seems likely that domestic demand will rise faster than production, with consequent curtailment of exports to the United States.

This study is one of a series designed to help the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. livestock industry keep informed of developments in meat and livestock exporting countries. It was prepared as a result of the author's visit to Mexico in late 1965.

During this visit, he was assisted by numerous individuals and organizations and he wishes to acknowledge their help. These included officials of the Mexican Department of Agriculture and the Mexican Cattlemen's Association, especially Sr. Ochoa Ochoa (President of the Confederation), who was most helpful in arranging an appropriate itinerary and valuable contacts with the various State livestock associations. The author also wishes to acknowledge the assistance given to him by the U.S. Agricultural Attaché, John C. Scholl, and his assistants, Lawrence R. Fouchs and Robert S. FitzSimmonds, who throughout the entire study gave him their utmost cooperation.

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LIVESTOCK and MEAT Industry of MEXICO

by John E. Riesz
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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Livestock and meat production is an important segment of Mexico's agricultural economy. The livestock industry is located in two separate and distinct regions. The northern region is very similar to the southwestern part of the United States; the southern is semi-tropical. The northern region is primarily a supplier of feeder cattle and beef to the United States, whereas the southern area produces most of the meat for Mexican domestic consumption.

Although since 1960 Mexican cattle numbers have increased quite rapidly, this increase is felt by some to be falling behind the nation's growth, both per capita and income. Thus, for the future, Mexico may well be a deficit producing area rather than the surplus one it is now.

The United States is almost the sole market for Mexican exports of surplus feeder cattle and beef. This will in all probability continue to be the case because of the proximity of the large U.S. market.

Certain programs are underway in Mexico which are designed to stimulate livestock production. However, certain impediments to growth of the livestock industry, involving such factors as land distribution and the availability of agricultural credit, are tending to hold back the rate of increase.

Mexico and the United States have worked under a joint commission for years to eradicate foot-and-mouth disease (*aftosa*) in Mexico and in more recent years to watch for new outbreaks of this disease and to suppress such outbreaks when and if they occur.

Much attention is now being focused on expanded joint programs to eliminate or suppress the screwworm throughout Mexico, the ultimate objective being to patrol the narrow southern border of Mexico rather than the present long U.S.-Mexican border. The United States is interested in developing the most feasible and effective method possible to prevent the spread of the screwworm from Mexican to U.S. cattle. The use of sterile male flies in infested areas is now the most commonly used method of attack.

It should also be noted that many Mexican cattle are heavily infested with ticks. In fact, Mexican cattlemen in general are even more disturbed about ticks than screwworms.

PRODUCTION

The livestock industry is important in Mexico, since it contributes about 6 percent of gross national production. Agriculture in general contributes about 20 percent—with crops the main source of agricultural income. This makes livestock production about one-third of total agricultural production in terms of value.

Farm conditions

Nearly all the livestock are raised on grass. The amount of native pastureland in Mexico in 1960 was 195 million acres, about 47 percent of the total land in farms and 40 percent of the total land area. The natural pastureland is divided into two groups—that on plains and that on hillsides. On the latter, which exceeds 58 percent of the total area of grassland, the stocking rate is lower. In northern and eastern Mexico pasture is found mostly on the plains, whereas in other parts of the country it is located mostly on hillsides.

Cattle are raised in all parts of the country; however, the heaviest concentrations are in the States of Veracruz, Jalisco, and Chihuahua. The cattle industry in northern Mexico is based primarily on exporting feeder and stocker cattle to the United States. The industry in southern Mexico supplies meat for domestic consumption, particularly to Mexico City.

The northern and southern areas are separate and distinct both in the type cattle raised, the method of raising, and the end-use of the production. The dividing line between the regions is approximately the Tropic of Cancer which crosses Mexico from Cuidad Victoria to Mazatlan.

Cattle south of this line tend to have Brahman—or Bos Indus—blood, along with strains of native or Corriente cattle. Since this zone is a tropical one, production is more hazardous because of intense heat, humidity, and prevalence of insect-borne diseases.

Cattle in the northern States tend to have English-stock blood, with Hereford the predominant breed. Here, as elsewhere in Mexico, availability of feed depends to a large extent on rainfall. Although cattle are raised almost entirely on pastures, the practice of haymaking and ensilage is being carried on, on a small scale.

Mexico has distinct wet and dry seasons. The rainy season generally lasts from June to October. During it, forage is abundant and water holes are filled. Forage growth continues for about 2 or 3 months after the rainy season and provides ample feed for cattle. However, when this growth ceases, about March, pastures begin to deteriorate, water becomes scarce, and cattle begin losing weight. This situation varies from year to year. In very dry years, cattle have to be moved to areas where feed and water are available, or marketed prematurely to prevent starvation and death losses.

Cattle numbers

Cattle numbers in Mexico were officially placed at about 24 million head as of January 1966, although such cattle statistics are only estimates, since a complete livestock census is taken only once every 10 years.

According to the latest census data available, the cattle population of Mexico has grown from 10.1 million head in 1930 to 17.7 million head in 1960 (including about 1.7 million head of work animals).

Land

Mexican cattle are produced on various types of farms and ranches and under varied conditions. In northern Mexico, cattle ranches tend to be large, whereas in other areas where grass grows more abundantly, the size tends to be smaller. Over one-half of the cattle in Mexico are raised on ranches having an acreage of more than 10 acres and about 4 million head (about one-sixth) are raised on "ejidos," according to the 1960 census.

Land reform.—Tending to retard the growth of Mexico's cattle industry has been the system of land tenure, with ownership changing hands primarily through inheritance and with little competitiveness in terms of increased efficiencies through cost accounting or modernization. A land reform policy was written into the 1915 Constitution but this did not actually become effective until about 1934-40. Under this system, a rancher would be allowed to keep only that amount of land which is required to support a herd of 500 animals. The amount of land needed to do this would be based on stocking capacities, and would vary widely in different parts of the country.

The Mexican Government realized this land reform program would have a serious adverse effect on planning by the livestock industry of the country, and beginning about 1934 it granted "certificates of ineffectability." These certificates assured ranchers that for a stated period their land would not be taken from them for land reform. These certificates, good for 25 years, have recently begun to run out. In total, about 450 certificates were issued, about half of them in the State of Chihuahua.

Table 1.—MEXICO: Cattle numbers, slaughter, and beef and veal production, 1960–66

Year	Cattle		Beef and veal production	
	Numbers[1]	Slaughter	Average carcass wt.	Total production
	1,000 head	*1,000 head*	*Pounds*	*Million pounds*
1960	17,669	2,881	317	911.8
1961	18,125	2,983	322	959.8
1962	19,067	3,044	325	990.2
1963	20,185	3,202	332	1,063.8
1964	21,638	3,252	334	1,086.5
1965	22,965	3,300	334	1,103.4
1966	24,000			

Source: Office of the Agricultural Attache, Mexico City. [1] Includes work animals.

One plan, privately proposed as a solution by the landowner, in effect would allow holders of these certificates to retain their land holdings after the expiration of their "certificates," and would be based on the number of families to be resettled on the land if it were expropriated. For example, the landholders have proposed that if the land taken from a man by land reform would support 100 families, then in the place of this change he would buy land in an area more suited to crop raising, which would support approximately double the number of families which his expropriated land would have supported. (Such undeveloped crop land is now available in the western part of the country.)

This program now is on a trial basis; however, it is felt that if good results are obtained, it will be enlarged to cover all of the land holdings which are held under certificates of ineffectability.

Pastures

Since Mexican cattle are range-fed, considerable development in this industry could be gained through improved pasturage.

Pastures in Mexico are mainly in native grasses. There is at present a movement, however, to introduce improved grass. Due to high costs, this has so far been done on a large scale only in the Huasteca area of east-central Mexico. Tall grasses, such as guinea and bangola, have been introduced into this area and are providing a very plentiful source of forage. These improved pastures, however, must be cleared of new brush growth every two or three years. The clearing is usually done by hand labor, since this is less expensive than use of machinery. In the northern area of Mexico, while some pasture improvement has been started, this has been done only on a very small scale, with improved grasses introduced primarily for erosion control rather than increased carrying capacity.

The pastures in Mexico show a considerable difference in carrying capacity. Those in the Huasteca area can carry about one animal per two hectares while those in the drier north sometimes require up to 30 or 35 hectares per animal.

Credit and costs

Both sources of financing for the industry's operations, and also the allocation of money in production, are of prime importance to producers, but both present problems in Mexico. Availability of credit is limited, and the costs of securing it can be very high.

Loans to producers are generally made on a short-term basis, usually for 1 year. Interest rates on these loans are regulated by law at a maximum of 1 percent per month plus carrying charges, bookkeeping costs, and other unspecified costs. In many cases, these additional charges increase the price of credit to about 20 percent per year.

Collateral is required for loans; however, in most cases land is not acceptable as collateral because of the projected land reform and the threat of expropriation. This makes credit very difficult to obtain in most instances. Although these credit problems do not affect the large landholder as much as the small rancher, the lack of credit has tended to hold back the expansion of the livestock industry.

No official studies on production costs have been made in Mexico. A lack of uniform cost accounting methods in the industry makes it impossible to arrive at meaningful average cost-of-production figures to compare with producers' costs elsewhere.

However, information received from individual producers indicates that fixed production costs, i.e., land and buildings, account for 50-75 percent of the costs of producing a marketable animal. (It should be noted that, typically, this land changes hands through inheritance rather than being bought or rented, though locally existing rentals are accepted as a basis of land values.)

Marketing costs of animals are different for those shipped to Mexico City for slaughter and for those sent to the United States as feeder animals. When the animals are shipped to Mexico City, marketing costs include state, county, and federal taxes, transportation charges, and a small charge for labor. However, when a feeder animal is shipped to the United States from northern Mexico, some additional charges are incurred. These include a charge for holding at the quarantine station and a Mexican export duty, as well as a commission for the export agent and for the import agent.

Meat production

Mexican beef production has moved steadily upward during the last few years, with some leveling off in 1964. This production has been sufficient to supply domestic needs at present consumption levels, as well as supplying an export market to the United States.

Mexican meat production is conducted either in Federally inspected meat plants—which are the ones authorized to export to the United States—or in numerous municipal slaughterhouses.

One of the main features of beef production in Mexico is slaughter near the point of consumption. (This applies to domestically consumed meat but not, of course, to exported meat.) A large town will usually have a municipal slaughterhouse complete with holding pens. Refrigeration is usually minimal and the kill of one day is sold to retailers the same day. Cattle are trucked or driven from the surrounding countryside to the slaughterhouse. It is usual that the cattle are sold by the head; however, use of scales and selling by weight are becoming more prevalent.

The largest consumption center in Mexico is Mexico City. Other major consumption centers are Guadalajara and Monterrey. These draw on cattle from the surrounding areas to supply their needs. Mexico City draws heavily on the "Huasteca" area for cattle. This area is comprised of northern Veracruz, southern Tamaulipas, eastern San Luis Potosí and northern Hidalgo. Generally, the Huasteca region is semi-tropical and supports lush pastures. However, it does have a wet season and a dry one and holding ponds for water must be built to sustain the cattle through the dry season.

Up until mid-1965, any meat sold in the Mexico City market had to be from cattle slaughtered in the local municipal slaughterhouse. In mid-1965, this rule was modified because of high demand in this major city and meat was allowed entry from TIF plants outside the federal district. This meat from outside sources was subject to the same tax as meat processed in the municipal slaughterhouse. Under this modified system, some small quantities of meat have been shipped into Mexico City. However, on January 3, 1966, by Presidential decree, this rule was again modified. Fresh or frozen meat shipped into the Mexico City market currently is free of any additional taxes or levies. This new decree will allow cattlemen in the north, who previously found it uneconomical to send meat to the Mexico City market, to have this alternative outlet for their production.

MARKETING

Domestic consumption

Over 90 percent of Mexico's beef and veal production is consumed domestically, with all exports going to the United States. Principal commercial domestic market is the Mexico City one.

Per capita meat consumption in Mexico has remained fairly stable over the last few years, averaging about 40 pounds, with the largest single component of beef, amounting to about 24 to 25 pounds per capita per year. This per capita figure, which has not changed considerably in the past few years, should gradually increase in the future as living standards improve, and as population is increasing rapidly at a rate estimated at 3.5 percent annually.

Foreign trade

In contrast with an overall unfavorable trade balance with the United States, Mexico has a very favorable balance on agricultural commodities, including meat and meat products. For the 1961-65 average, the United States imported from Mexico $57.6 million worth of livestock and meat products and exported $13.6 million worth of livestock and meat products.

Mexico's exports in the livestock-meat product field are concentrated in two main categories—cattle and beef. During the 1961-65 period, Mexican exports of cattle varied from an annual low of about 331,000 head to a high of 752,000 head. About 90 percent of all cattle exports from Mexico to the United States are feeder and stocker cattle weighing from 200 to 700 pounds—typically considered supplemental to the U.S. beef cattle industry. Some small numbers of light-weight calves and heavy-weight slaughter animals are also shipped.

Mexican beef exports to the United States averaged about 58 million pounds, product weight, during the 1961-64 period. They varied from a low of about 49

Table 2.—U.S. imports of livestock products from Mexico, 1961–65

Commodity	1961		1962		1963		1964		1965[1]	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Red meat:	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*
Beef:										
Bone-in	3,614	1,059	2,864	880	5,095	1,417	3,399	1,076	4	1
Boneless	49,480	18,119	55,394	19,160	67,056	21,759	45,146	15,241	46,056	16,070
Other	48	16	56	23	98	36	8	3	9	10
Veal	242	79	975	349	719	249	351	117	214	77
Total beef & veal	53,384	19,273	59,289	20,412	72,968	23,461	48,094	16,437	46,283	16,158
Pork	80	27	9	3	1	1	---	---	6	7
Mutton	30	11	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total red meat	53,494	19,311	59,298	20,415	72,969	23,462	48,904	16,437	46,289	16,165
Variety meats	143	25	195	29	174	25	36	4	174	19
Sausage casings	22	24	[2]	20	[2]	6	[2]	[3]	[2]	[2]
Hides & skins[4]	90	23	8	2	---	---	---	---	---	---
Livestock:	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*
Cattle										
Under 200 lb.	8,655	349	24,925	980	27,120	1,033	13,162	476	16,921	582
200–700 lb.	497,999	36,307	690,228	48,338	540,099	35,366	315,962	19,922	504,285	34,101
Dairy—700 & over	46	8	34	7	7	1	37	6	7	1
Other—700 & over	36,410	4,714	36,732	4,625	18,123	2,382	1,777	589	14,054	1,846
Bulls for breeding	---	---	18	90	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total cattle	543,110	41,378	751,937	54,040	585,349	38,782	330,938	20,993	535,267	36,530
Horses, mules, etc.	774	84	313	32	479	60	382	18	61	12
Total value	---	60,845	---	74,538	---	62,335	---	37,452	---	52,726

[1] Preliminary. [2] Not available. [3] Less than $500. [4] 1,000 pieces.

million pounds to a high of 72 million pounds. Most of this meat is boneless beef. However, it is estimated that about 10 percent of Mexico's beef exports are in the form of primal cuts. The 1965 meat exports to the United States were 46 million pounds.

Mexican cattle and meat product imports from the United States are more varied. The United States exports about 12,000 head of cattle per year to Mexico. These are divided almost evenly between beef and dairy breeding cattle. The United States also exports small numbers of sheep and swine, primarily for breeding purposes. Other important U.S. exports to Mexico are frozen pork, lard, stearic acid, and cattle hides.

While the United States has other alternative markets than Mexico for its livestock exports, Mexico has in the past relied solely on the United States as a market for its livestock surpluses.

With that country's increasing prosperity indicating prospective increases in domestic consumption, combined with somewhat static livestock production, it is not expected that Mexico will be able to increase its exports to the United States to any significant degree within the next 5 to 10 years, although Mexico would like to ship as much as feasible for foreign exchange reasons, as an aid to import trade.

Table 3.—U.S. exports of livestock products to Mexico, 1961–65

Commodity	1961		1962		1963		1964		1965[1]	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Red meat:	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*	*1,000 pounds*	*US$ 1,000*
Beef and veal	175	98	97	52	198	101	257	139	163	167
Pork										
Fresh or frozen	6,608	648	6,035	590	6,444	653	7,458	975	1,763	236
Other	103	36	649	156	71	15	218	93	244	95
Total pork	6,711	684	6,684	746	6,515	668	7,676	1,068	2,007	331
Lamb & mutton	36	9	33	7	11	3	21	5	33	10
Sausage	43	19	80	33	64	24	111	43	116	49
Other red meat	114	44	67	20	86	26	134	42[2]	799[2]	229
Total red meat	7,079	854	6,961	858	6,874	822	8,199	1,297	3,118	786
Variety meats	2,588	348	1,745	267	3,833	493	4,309	572	555	128
Sausage casings	[3]	1	2	1	---	---	3	2	[3]	[4]
Hides & skins[5]	592	4,379	563	4,026	668	3,656	1,312	7,272	1,634	9,188
Mohair	70	75	80	99	198	192	336	451	394	458
Meat extract	30	28	---	---	[2]	[3]	---	---	1	2
Animal fats:										
Lard	11,718	1,397	11,004	1,151	10,819	1,070	7,231	945	11,151	1,510
Inedible tallow & greases	5,396	477	4,126	412	2,901	288	2,823	313	4,467	412
Livestock:										
Cattle:	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*	*Number*	*US$ 1,000*
Dairy for breeding	5,317	1,507	5,826	1,832	7,891	2,694	4,902	1,557	8,377	2,642
Other for breeding	6,650	1,837	5,030	1,506	4,934	1,471	6,004	1,775	6,851	1,857
Other not for breeding	630	168	557	143	243	77	896	236	12,858	1,627
Hogs	290	28	476	31	1,781	82	13,056	597	9,684	555
Sheep	897	34	25,806	568	3,236	74	17,128	159	18,437	276
Horses	50	32	190	133	252	87	306	116	436	145
Total value	---	11,165	---	11,027	---	11,006	---	15,292	---	19,586

[1] Preliminary. [2] Includes canned meats and meat specialties. [3] Less than 500 pounds. [4] Less than 500 dollars. [5] 1,000 pieces.

Cattle feeding

In the process of moving cattle into the United States for sale, an attempt has been made to fatten them and make them market-ready by use of feedlots. This drylot feeding has therefore been concentrated in northern Mexico. The Banco Agricola, an arm of the Secretariat of Agriculture, maintains a number of feedlots in the northern States. In addition, there are a number of privately owned lots, where ownership changes hands into those of the temporary feeder in the movement of the cattle to market.

Experience to date with these feedlots indicates that it is uneconomical to run cattle through them for extended fattening periods. Feed costs in Mexico are quite high and most owner-operators felt that their break-even point on feeding the cattle owned, at 1965 price levels for feed and cattle, was about 30 to 45 days on feed. Since these animals normally lose weight for approximately the first 10 days and then take the next 10 to regain this shrinkage, only approximately the last 10 to 25 days are left from this 30-45 day period for actual weight gains. Thus, at the time of the author's visit, most of the lots were standing empty in terms of cattle fattened for market.

However, they are used to a certain extent during the period of February to May, when cattle pastures are dried up. At this time, these lots are used not primarily for feeding cattle for weight gains but just to maintain their condition.

The feed generally used in the lots is a mixture similar to that found in the southwestern United States except that no corn is used. Grain sorghum and barley are substituted for corn in the ration. In some areas, molasses is also used as an additive to the mixed ration, although still on a rather limited basis. Strict government controls on molasses sometimes preclude its use as a feed in lots other than those run by the Secretariat of Agriculture.

Slaughtering and grading

Most States in Mexico have municipal slaughterhouses, but few are equipped with modern facilities. The vast majority of these plants operate on a small scale and rely primarily on the liberal use of water for sanitation purposes.

There are, however, some plants which are quite modern and well-equipped. These plants are usually the so-called TIF plants which are controlled by the Meat Inspection Service of the Mexican Department of Agriculture. The plants are generally well equipped, usually with U.S. or Western European equipment, and well-managed, including flexible production goals and attempts at cost accounting procedures.

Mexico has no meat grading service. A big rangy Brahma cow from the Huasteca area therefore might bring as much money per pound as a Hereford steer which had been fed for 3 months in a northern feed lot. Thus, quality plays no part in the price-setting mechanism; this situation, in fact, has a tendency to retard the production of quality meats.

Transportation

The reader would ordinarily expect Mexican exports to move in considerable quantity by water, because of the nation's long coastlines. However, at Mexico's main seaports on the Gulf of Mexico coast, Tampico and Veracruz, refrigerated facilities for holding meat for export are very limited. Therefore, it is not expected that any large quantities of meat will be exported by sea from Mexico. In addition, these seaport towns do not have any holding pens of any size in which to collect cattle for sea shipment.

In mid-1965 an attempt was made to ship about 1,200 head of cattle from Tampico to Italy; however, because of health certification problems, this shipment was never completed.

Meat from northern Mexico normally moves to the United States by truck, although some shipments are made by rail. Cattle shipments are also made predominantly by trucks. Meat which moves into the Mexico City market is usually shipped by truck, although in recent years some small shipments by rail have been made, as well. Except for the main highways, most roads are unpaved and in poor condition.

CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

The cattlemen of Mexico are highly organized, and are represented on the national level by the National Livestock Confederation. This Confederation consists of about 45 regional livestock unions, which are in turn composed of over 1,100 local associations.

The local associations provide somewhat the same services as are provided by cattlemen's associations in the United States, i.e., veterinary service, supplies, and management assistance. In addition to providing these services to cattlemen, the National Livestock Confederation is an important force in bringing into focus the industry's views to the Government. This association is truly a national organization in that it gives equal voice to the various diverse types of cattlemen who are members.

The National Livestock Confederation is not only a powerful force in Mexico but it is also active in international circles.

SHORT-TERM SUPPLY

In 1965 and early 1966, Mexico City apparently suffered a temporary shortage of meat. Cattle imports from the Huasteca area—the normal source of supply—were somewhat below requirements to fulfill the consumption needs in Mexico City. As a result, some meat and cattle were brought in from other areas as far away as Hermisillo in Sonora. However, even with these additional supplies, it was necessary in 1965 to import approximately 15,000 head of cattle from the United States for immediate slaughter in Mexico City. These cattle were primarily cows from Texas.

It is questionable that this deficit in Mexico City was caused by an actual shortage of cattle in Mexico. The temporary situation appeared in May and June and afterwards—just when the rainy season was beginning. Thus, cattlemen had a tendency to hold cattle on the lush pastures produced by the rains rather than to ship them to market. In addition, many cattlemen were inclined to hold cattle off the Mexico City market because of strict price controls.

POTENTIAL

The potential for increasing beef and veal production in Mexico tends to be somewhat limited, and its realization a long-term objective at the best. Increases will come primarily from better pasture management and improvement schemes. Substantial gains in carcass weights are not expected to occur. Cattle in Mexico average about 330 pounds carcass weight, and this is not expected to change appreciably in the foreseeable future. An expansion in cattle numbers on natural grasses without intensive management practices would result in overgrazing, with a consequent deterioration of the pastures.

However, with the use of good conservation and range management practices and by introducing improved grasses, some increases in the carrying capacity of Mexican pastures could be effected.

However, with the Mexican population increasing about 3.5 percent per year, and the demand for beef rising, it is not likely that beef production will continue to keep pace with domestic requirements. In the long run, it is highly probable that Mexico will have less meat and live cattle to export than it has had in past years, as consumption utilizes an increasing share of the nation's total livestock production.

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